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STABILITY OPERATIONS: CREATING A NEW AIR FORCE SPECIALITY CODE

by

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Disclaimer

Contents

Abstract

Since 9/11, our nation has had to focus its foreign policy on failing, failed, and fragile states. The U.S government has struggled not only with using the correct compliment of instruments of power with regard to stability and reconstruction operations but with also integrating them when required. The Department of State's Coordinator for Stabilization and Reconstruction was stood up in 2004 to the lead U.S. government agency in these operations. However, the struggle continues as the office has neither the authority, funding or internal capacity to effectively integrate all agencies across the government.

This paper addresses the current issues with the existing construct and identifies that the Department of Defense must be able to complete tasks when the civilian capability is not able such as in a non-permissive environment. The argument is that the U.S Air Force has within its support structure, many of the skills sets required to accomplish many of the tasks required in all phases. However, the Air Force has had a myopic view of how to adapt to meet today's requirements. Therefore, this paper provides a methodical review of capabilities and the changes required to training, doctrine, education, and force structure to enable the Air Force to respond to the full spectrum of operations. Additionally, the recommendation will suggest creating a new Air Force Specialty Code in order to maintain the cultural and language nuances of a respective geographic area and build relationship with the interagency as well as other actors.

Creating a new Air Force Specialty Code will develop and focus leaders to work collaboratively among all of the actors involved in addressing instability problems caused by F3 states.

Introduction

Our nation was forced to re-evaluate its outlook towards failing, failed and fragile (F3) states "when the second-poorest country in the world became the foundation for the most significant strike that we have ever had on U.S. territory."[1] The post Cold War environment did not bring the "calm, peace, prosperity, and progressive growth" people thought it would.[2] Instead, it changed the nature of conflicts. They are no longer limited to the battlefield but cross all domains with a myriad of complex transnational problems. These transnational problems include; but are not limited to, terrorism, crime, corruption, human trafficking, drugs, poor governance, poverty, and disease, all of these are factors which cause instability.

The complex transnational problems that characterize F3 states require a broad and unified approach. These multi-faceted complex problems cannot be solved by one government alone, and therefore, require a concert of governments and international actors ultimately working in unison.[3] The U.S government is painfully aware of this fact after two large scaled attempts at stabilization and reconstruction in Afghanistan and Iraq. These engagements have proved more difficult, costly, and protracted than policy makers originally believed. To work towards a unity of purpose at the international level, the U.S. government must continue to develop its ability to coordinate among its own interagencies and in with International (IO) and Non-governmental Organizations (NGO). This unified approach will require continued and increased cooperation at least at three levels of the U.S. government: international, national, and departmental. For the approach to work, it will also require acceptance that "the lines separating

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[1] Pascual, *Weak and Failed States,* 1.
[2] Zinni, *Battle for Peace,* 209.
[3] FM3-07*, Stability Operations, 1-4.*

war, peace, diplomacy, and development have become more blurred, and no longer fit the neat

organizational charts of the 20th century."[4] The approach will require developing relationships

among the U.S. interagencies and among other actors. It will require a new way of thinking

about how the U.S. can use all of its instruments of power to manage and project its power to

respond, to prevent, or rehabilitate failing states.

This paper will address the current problems with the U.S. government's methods for

addressing contingency relief and reconstruction operations and recommend that the Air Force

restructure to fill current gaps. Existing expertise required for stabilization and reconstruction

tasks were resident in the U.S. Air Force (USAF) before and have been expanded upon since

9/11. These resident capabilities, with further development, will prepare a cadre of personnel

with regional experience to the Joint Force Commander and to the whole of government

interagency team. Creating a new Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) will develop and focus

leaders to work collaboratively among all of the actors involved in addressing instability

problems caused by F3 states.

Background Problem and Significance

The world changed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The new world order saw a

rise in complex emergency operations. The U.S. and "global community addressed these

reconstruction and stability issues in an *ad hoc* fashion."[5] For the U.S., the military became the

only tool the government was willing to use. The military was prepared to deal with the security

problems but not prepared for the "political, humanitarian, reconstruction, social, economic, and

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[4] Gates, (speech, U.S. Global Leadership Campaign)
[5] Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization website. "Mission statement."

other dimensions."[6] The military viewed their role in the traditional sense that executed force on force major combat operations. They met these missions with an unwillingness to perform what they called Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW). Therefore, the military made limited changes to training, doctrine, organization, and education. However, "the U.S. military has conducted an operation related to peacekeeping, peacemaking, or post-conflict occupation roughly every two years since the end of the Cold War."[7] Additionally, these operations demand officers and troops to have different kinds of training, outlooks, and capabilities.[8]

A U.S. government doctrine or framework in which diplomacy, development, and military action was integrated was absent in both Afghanistan and Iraq.[9] The government realized this and began adapting to the complexity of the problems and the need for unity of effort, and has undertaken steps to begin unifying its approach with its policy regarding F3 states. "In 2004 the U.S. government decided to set up an office that was dealing directly with this issue of weak states and conflict and what to do in stabilization and reconstruction issues."[10] Because of National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD)-44, the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) stood up within the Department of State (DoS). The office was designed to oversee coordination of the U.S. government agencies and solidify stabilization and reconstruction policies and tasks among the U.S. government.

In response to the 2002 National Security Strategy (NSS) statement that the U.S. is threatened more by weak and failing states than by conquering ones, the DoD elevated stability and reconstruction operations to the same level as major combat operations.[11] This mission

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[6] Zinni, *Battle for Peace,* 85.
[7] Carafano, *Winning the Peace.*
[8] Zinni, *Battle for Peace,* 68.
[9] Bowen, *Hard lessons*, 338.
[10] Pascual, Carlos, Weak and Failed States, 3.
[11] President, *National Security Strategy*, 1

outlined in *DoD directive 3000.05 Security, Stabilization, Transition, and Reconstruction* (SSTR), is the guiding document that states the military will be trained to do SSTR. This change means three things for the military. The first major change is that the ad hoc way in which nation building, stability operations, or MOOTW were conducted in the past will change to a defined, unified U.S. government approach. This fact coupled with the large efforts taking place in Afghanistan and Iraq illustrate that these missions are not only here to stay but also may be the mainstay of the U.S. military for the foreseeable future. Therefore, training, doctrine, and organizational change must occur to incorporate the mission effectively. Second, it means the continued reliance on the military as a national instrument of power to deal with the myriad of foreign policy issues regarding weak and failing states for which there is no unified national strategy. There are many arguments for and against the militarization of foreign policy. However, the "military's predominant presence and its ability to command and control forces and logistics under extreme conditions may give it the de facto lead in stability operations normally governed by other agencies that lack such capabilities."[12] This capability is critical for ensuring security of a failing or failed state, and that state will not deteriorate to a lawless vacuum in which an insurgency can develop. U.S. service men and women will continue to train and equip for the full range of military operations (ROMO). Finally, F3 states are a meeting point for the causes of instability and when ignored these states can act as an incubator for threats that can suddenly emerge and violently spread out of control. Conflict spillover, transnational crime, and terrorism can thrive while weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation remain a threat to the U.S. national security.[13]

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[12] Joint Pub. 3-0 *supra note* 62, at V-24.
[13] Crocker, *Engaging Failing States*, 263.

Why DoD Must Be Prepared

S/CRS stood up in 2004 as a result of NSPD-44, which realigned DoS as the lead agency for stabilization and reconstruction operations. However, the S/CRS has "been hamstrung both by weak budgets and a lack of authority."[14] This lack of funding, authority, and internal capacity has key implications for DoD and how it must prepare to meet its responsibilities as outlined in DoD 3005.05. In order for S/CRS to function as envisioned, it requires three changes: funding, authority, and internal capacity. The monumental task to "monitor activities worldwide, prepare contingency plans, coordinate the development of relief and reconstruction strategy across the government, and perform human-resources functions (recruitment, training, equipping) on a grand scale" is an impractical requirement with a small staff. [15]

The first area of concern is funding. DoD provided $110M in "start-up" money via section 1207 authority of the Defense Authorization Act.[16] Additional funding was provided in the amount of $45M in fiscal year (FY09) and $323M in FY10.[17] While this seems like a substantial amount of money, in a stabilization or reconstruction operation, it is actually minimal. In comparison, the U.S. is currently spending $3.6 Billion a month in Afghanistan.[18] In October 2008 congress passed the Reconstruction and Stabilization Civilian Management Act of 2008. The new architecture created by RSCMA assigned the State Department the lead in managing government-wide civilian preparation for contingency operations.[19] It is unknown at this time whether congress has appropriated the funding required.

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[14] Bowen, *Hard lessons*, 340.
[15] Ibid, 340.
[16] Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (CRS) website
[17] Ibid.
[18] Congressional Research Report, 20.
[19] Bowen, *Hard lessons*, 340.

The S/CRS position lacks authority due to its location. The office, responsible for coordinating and integrating with other departments and agencies is embedded within the DoS and reports to the Secretary of State. The position should be at least at the secretary level and perhaps at the National Security Council level and it must carry the authorities required to effectively accomplish the mission. In order to be effective, the S/CRS must be able to integrate all aspects of the various departments. Having the coordinator below the secretarial level with no authority further inhibits integration. "Only in late 2008, more than four years after its creation, were the office's proposals for government-wide reform beginning to gain any traction. Even though the Congress has now written the roles of S/CRS fully into law, its ability to foster change across the government remains unproven, and many of the same structural obstacles remain."[20]

DoS lacks the internal capacity to take on its daunting mandate. It has received some funding and has begun building a capacity. The Civilian Response Corps (CRC) is hiring 2,250 personnel that will fit into three components: active with 250 personnel that are deployable in 48 hours and 2000 each in the stand-by and reserve.[21] The stand-by personnel are resident in eight other USG agencies while the reserve would comprise personnel from the public sector and state and local governments. The CRC:

> provides the U.S. Government with a pool of qualified, trained, and ready-to-deploy civilian professionals to support overseas reconstruction and stabilization operations. Additionally, the Civilian Response Corps reinforces regular standing staff in Washington and overseas in support of reconstruction and stabilization operations in countries or regions that are at risk of, in, or are in transition from conflict or civil strife. If U.S. national security interests are at stake, we must be prepared to respond quickly with the right civilian experts.[22]

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[20] Ibid, 340.
[21] CRS website
[22] CRS website. *Introduction to CRC.*

While CRC is urgently hiring to build a deployable capacity, there are planning considerations that DoD must take into account. First, as the agency that will execute the policy, and be held accountable for actions that occur on the ground, DoD must not only be actively involved in the formulation of policy, but also in shaping the policy which requires a "boots on the ground" perspective. [23] This level of engagement must increase from its present state. Second, DoD personnel will make-up some of the team that operates during stability operations. This is true even if the military's supporting task is to provide security. As seen with Afghanistan and Iraq, the DoD may engage in reconstruction operations alone and for a long duration until the security situation is permissive enough to allow civilian actors to operate safely. Therefore, DoD personnel must be trained to handle this task alone, as required by DoD 3005.05 "be able to execute the full spectrum of stability operations until such a time that the environment permits other agencies, NGOs, and IOs to work" together.[24] An additional planning factor for DoD is that a non-permissive environment prevents civilian actors from operating effectively if at all. What is not clear about the CRC mandate is what level of security they require to operate.

Therefore, organizationally DoS may retain the lead organization status, but the reality on the ground will prove that the DoD is responsible for stability operations. "We know that at least in the early phases of any conflict, contingency, or natural disaster, the U.S. military – as has been the case throughout our history – will be responsible for security, reconstruction, and providing basic sustenance and public services."[25] This is due in part because DoD is the only entity able to conduct stability operations across all phases and continue working in such a non-

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[23] Zinni, *Battle for Peace,*31.
[24] FM 3-07, *Stability Operations,*1-3.
[25] Gates, (speech, U.S. Global Leadership Campaign)

permissive environment. In order to be prepared to conduct operations, the Services must continue to develop and build on existing skills."[26]

A current example of why DoD needs to continue and expand developing its SSTR capacity is evidenced by the situation in Afghanistan. While the lead agency baton was passed to S/CRS in 2004, DoD is still at the front for a variety of reasons. DoD is not just serving in a supporting security role while civilian agencies take on reconstruction efforts. Instead, DoD has taken back several missions that were conducted by civilian agencies because the security situation deteriorated. Examples include, the police training and mentoring role in Afghanistan as it transferred from the European Union to the U.S. Army. Additionally, DoD JAGs are still performing rule of law missions that might better fall under a civilian governance agency.[27] There are additional mission sets the DoD has undertaken such as the Provincial Reconstruction Team Commanders. The challenge is getting the right balance with a redundant capability within two departments. DoD must have the same skills the civilian agencies possess, thus allowing DoD forces to provide all necessary functions until a transition of functions to civilians can occur. However, while not mentioned, the military must also be prepared to transition the functions from civilians back to the military if the security situation slides towards non-permissiveness. Achieving the balance will require further integration between DoS and DoD personnel throughout their careers with a focus of building career long relationships.

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[26] DoD 3005.05,
[27] Tasikas, *Rule of Law in Afghanistan,* 52.

Solution: Develop Existing Capability

A common misperception is that the DoD is about lethal combat power but in fact, offers a much more diverse capability than combat power alone. The Department not only has resident capability within its current training and doctrine, but also has gained years of experience in stability tasks since the end of the Cold War. What is needed is a change to the military's warfighting doctrine, which encourages fighting wars, to prevent them. General Zinni acknowledges that none of the wars fought since World War II (WWII) are anything like that war, yet we ignored all of that and yet kept using that model "for anything tough and serious we took on." [28] A doctrinal shift coupled with a review of existing capabilities will prove the Air Force has existing AFSCs that fit within the stability operations requirements such as: civil engineers, security forces, logistics, services, legal, and chaplains. All of these career fields have required skills to conduct various aspects of stability operations. Building on existing capabilities prevents a start from scratch mentality. In fact, drastic changes are not required, only adjustments to doctrine, training, and education would be the only changes needed.

The other services are implementing their own adaptation to 3005.05. For example, the Navy has created a Civil Affairs Maritime Group, not to replace the Army, but to build core capabilities to conduct stability operations.[29] The Army has expanded their Civil Affairs by standing up a brigade and instituted SSTR as a Division within their headquarters G3/5/7.[30] The USAF has made headway in adapting its existing capabilities but there is still more to do, especially with regard to its support functions.

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[28] Zinni, *Battle for Peace, 88.*
[29] U.S. Navy Web, *Navy established Maritime Civil Affairs Group.*
[30] Fritz, *Air Force and Stab Ops Transformation*, 130.

Air Force Focus On Stability Operations

With special operations being the only exception, the Air Force has failed to place required emphasis on stability operations.[31] The recent efforts the Air Force has undertaken accept the stability operations role are a "myopic view of airpower that only considers what airpower can do to the enemy."[32] There has been some effort to suggest a more active role in supporting SSTR; however, the focus is very narrow and centered around aircraft and Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR).[33]

While air mobility, air strike, and ISR missions occur in both Iraq and Afghanistan, the latter two are primarily supporting the counterinsurgency effort while air mobility supports all efforts. The counterinsurgency effort is interrelated to the stabilization and reconstruction efforts. Security cannot be established with a hostile insurgency trying to de-stabilize activities. However, there is a parallel effort among Airmen supporting these intertwined stability operations. These Airmen are in the mission support community and while they do have some of the vast and diverse skills that stability operations require, they are not fully prepared as DoD 3000.05 dictates. One deficiency is lack of proper cultural and language training.

Airmen do receive culture and language training prior to deployment. However, the preparation for these missions is on an ad hoc basis. A recent RAND study states that culture and language training must be continuous or life-long learning opportunities.[34] The study also notes that predeployment training works best as a refresher because many of the cross-cultural training elements are lost while the airmen is focused on safety and combat training, for

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[31] Wurster, *Mastering the Art of the Possible*, 82.
[31] Martin, *McChrystal's Frank Talk.*
[32] Bellflower, *Softside of Airpower*, 1.
[33] Montgomery, Irregular Warfare White paper. (Idea presented throughout, not presented on a specific page).
[34] Hardison, *Cross-Cultural Skills*, 13.

example. Therefore, the just-in-time training is not the ideal method for the deployment. The

Air Force accepts this status because these "Joint Expeditionary Taskings" (JET) are designed to

fill temporary gaps in the overstretched Army and Marine Corps. However, arguments can be

made for the strategic consequences due to a lack of continuity when rotating airman each

deployment.

Two major elements in stability operations are trust and relationships. Trust and

relationships built on the ground are lost with the next new airmen rotating in theater. Another

aspect that is frustrating commanders are the mistakes airmen unknowingly make that have long-

term consequences. This argument is documented by the standing up of the Afghanistan-

Pakistan Hands Program (AFPAK Hands). Prior to becoming the Commander in Afghanistan,

General McChrystal led a strategy review that recommended developing the AFPAK – Hands

program. The program is:

> designed to provide a greater focus and continuity on these countries as
> well as reduce the steep learning curve facing personnel on language and
> cultural issues when they land in Afghanistan. Military personnel who
> enter the program would have their assignments focused on the Af-Pak
> region of the world –so after serving on the ground, they would rotate to
> positions in the Defense Department that are focused on this part of the
> world.[35]

The methodology is similar to the Special Operations Command "deployment cycle whereby

units spend roughly six months deployed in a war zone and six months at home, keeping tabs on

their area of operations while they're away and returning to the same area time after time."[36]

This unusual arrangement, "which has been in use for several years, [by Special Operations

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[35] Boot, *McChrystal's New Way of War.*
[36] Boot, *McChrystal's New Way of War.*

Command] allows personal relationships to be cultivated and continued while still giving troops some downtime."[37]

This may be an effort to fill gaps left by civilians that lack the resources and capacity, it strengthens the argument that the military needs people to focus on a region throughout their career. Why is there no specialized group for North Africa or the Horn of Africa? These two areas, though they do receive focus from U.S. Africa Command, do not enjoy the continuity that AFPAK – Hands may provide. In fact, CJTF-HOA has been plagued with continuity problems in terms of turnover within and its relationships with IA personnel in the embassies.[38]

During his April 2009 address to the Air War College, Secretary Gates challenged leaders to "consider whether there is more the service might do to articulate and codify the unique role of airpower in stability operations."[39] In the words of Carl Builder, "Airpower must be more than force because the problems of the world must increasingly be addressed by the military with more than force."[40] General McChrystal also makes a plea for thinkers that know how to plan. If one considers these two leaders' appeal, the solution is to restructure the Air Force to both support current requirements and develop the force to apply it against future threats. While there is no crystal ball to tell anyone exactly what the next contingency will look like, much of the trend is pointing towards an intrastate complex intervention. F3 states, pan-insurgency, the negative characteristics of globalization such as transnational crime and terrorism will shape our

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[37] Boot, *McChrystal's New Way of War.*

[38] While assigned to Africa Command, I visited numerous embassies with both USAID regional and country personnel. Much of their complaints were lack of continuity with the DoD personnel. Once they developed a relationship, a new troop rotated in thus relearning aspects of the country and programs. The other frustrations stemmed from a lack of understanding and ability to integrate CJTF-HOA projects within the greater country Mission Strategic Plans.

[39] Robert M. Gates, (address Air War College).

[40] Builder, *AFDD2-6.*

operating environment. Couple the future with nation building tasks Air Force personnel are

already doing and there is a hefty experience pool to pull from initially.

This pool consists of mission support personnel such as security forces, medical,

logistics, and legal. The mainstay of these career fields includes many of the core tasks required

in stability operations. This paper's purpose is not suggesting the Air Force displace the Army's

ground role or to insert Air Force personnel where Civil Affairs or other personnel already fit.

The purpose instead suggests how the services can augment each other's and the IA capabilities

by filling gaps thus applying the force in ways that make sense. For example, a gap exists

between the two services concerning installation management. Civil engineer (CE) Airmen

maintain their main operating bases in garrison and deployed while the Army has civilianized or

contracted garrison functions. While the Army does deploy combat engineers, they do not have

the same capability as Air Force CE personnel. The Air Force is currently deploying CE airmen

on JET taskings to establish forward operating bases in Afghanistan. This pool of mission

support personnel could be used to select the first group of SSTR personnel.

Restructure: AFSC Development and Future Employment

The key distinction between training for major combat operations or SSTR is that

"multiple AARs [after action reports] say that SSTR requires different skill set than MCO."[41]

With this difference, the USAF must not only change training, education, development, and

employment, but also restructure itself to conduct SSTR. The U.S. military has a robust training

and educational infrastructure that can further train and develop designated SSTR personnel.

Training and education coupled with developmental assignments and field experience will

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[41] Carafano, *Winning the Peace.*

establish SSTR personnel permanently in a new AFSC. These SSTR personnel would reside in squadrons and groups at the tactical level or within IA positions or GCCs at the operational and strategic levels. Employment would occur based on regional focus and requirements based tasking.

Training for a new group of SSTR personnel would include the existing technical training with a focus on field operations and cultural development. Functions such as establishing civil security and civil control, restoring or providing essential services, repairing critical infrastructure, and providing humanitarian assistance are inherent skills in core AFSCs such as law enforcement, civil engineer, logistics and medical. These existing technical schools should produce future SSTR personnel by including additional training like conflict mitigation, complex emergencies, and negotiation.

Education for SSTR officers would take aspects of the Army's Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program. Officers will complete a master's degree at either a civilian university or one of the service universities with a focus on regional studies. After completion of a particular area the officer will do an in country tour for a year in the region. The rotational tours are similar to the Army's FAO program as it provides the same level of education and cultural depth. Post in-country tour and a regional tour at various agencies such as the Department of Agriculture, Defense Intelligence Agency, U.S. Agency for International Development, DoS, Department of Energy, United Nations (various offices), and the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance would take place.

The main difference between SSTR officers and the Army FAO or USAF International Affairs program is that the SSTR officers are not groomed for Attaché or Security Assistance duty at an embassy, but instead to advise the GCC and IA personnel as well as to execute

stability operations.[42] The SSTR officer's role is a military advisor that has a depth of

understanding in language and culture, military planning skills, and can properly advise on

stability operations matter during in all phases. The lifelong career development will include

training courses, conferences, seminars, exercises with foreign militaries, NGO workshops, IO

courses, and of course, actual operations in the field. The relationship building that occurs from

the constant interaction with the same personnel will assist in breaking down the departmental,

cultural, and other barriers. Additionally, field experience will also build trust and relationships

in all actors involved in SSTR, not just the IA.

The benefit of building these relationships in the field will allow a more cohesive unity of

purpose. Interestingly, both positive and negative relationships have been forged as the military

has extensive experience in responding to humanitarian crises. The realization of all involved is

that many actors will have to operate in the same environment whether they agree in principle or

not.

DoD has responded to large complex humanitarian emergencies that have required a

combined effort by DoD, IOs and NGOs. For example, many NGOs and even the United

Nations Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs were put back by the US military's

aggressive take-charge posture during the Tsunami relief effort.[43] This overwhelming capability

to project humanitarian aid was powerfully able to meet immediate basic needs of a devastated

population yet lacked an understanding of cultural sensitivities on the ground to include the

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[42] SAF/IA. *Strategic Plan*, 2. The plan lists international affairs officers core competencies as: political-military assessment, security assistance and cooperation, international armaments cooperation, foreign disclosure and technology transfer, comparative weapons analysis, international Airmen professional development and management, USAF global partnership strategy, interagency liaison, international training and education, international affairs policy and building partnership capacity. While some of these overlap in concept, like building partnership capacity or security assistance, the SSTR personnel will have a differing focus and a career long regional focus on stability issues. This includes working with a number of NGO and IO personnel.

[43] The anecdotal information from this paragraph came from several sources. 1) Briefing by DoSs Population, Migration and Refugee representative at the worldwide humanitarian assistance conference. 2) Conversation I had with the UN OCHA course director while in Liberia and 3) Meeting with NGOs in the hinterland of Uganda.

intricacies of working with NGOs. The NGOs had been working on the ground for years and had already built relationships with the population. Working together and deconflicting activities on the ground as a minimum and understanding the population are areas where DoD is actively trying to improve by learning. This lesson repeats itself repeatedly as DoD is increasingly involved in spaces that NGOs occupy with regard to F3 states. All actors must cooperate in order to affect the complex issues in a positive way. Some NGOs have no problem working with the DoD, while others do not approve of cooperating with an armed force. A way to increase communication and cooperation is to make lifelong relationships with many of these people to provide a level of understanding and mutual respect.

Create SSTR Squadrons/Groups

The proposal is to create Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) squadrons under SSTR Groups within Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) wings. These AFSOC squadrons would therefore fall under Special Operations Command (SOCOM) and use the same deployment to dwell ratio: six months deployed and six months at home.[44] Each region will have three squadrons, one available to deploy, two at home station training. The three squadrons allow surge capability as well as enough personnel that can assist in phase zero shaping activities.[45] Geographic Combatant Commands would have the ability to task them similar to the way existing Special Operations Forces (SOF) and Special Forces (SF) are tasked.

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[44] SOCOM posture statement, 23. Rationale is based on SOCOM model and effective relationships built with each other and the host nation. The SSTR units could also be placed in an IW wing if implemented.
[45] While at Africa Command there were never enough personnel to perform all of the security cooperation activities requesting by the embassies. These events included mil-to-mil events, humanitarian construction projects, medical events and were all focused on building partnership capacity. Additionally, the SSTR personal lead exercises and can train incoming units (that may be coming in for an exercise) with cultural and language skills to the point where they are aware of how to act. There have been some negative experiences with personnel completely unfamiliar with customs causing embarrassing mistakes.

The Unit Type Codes (UTCs) will provide an advisory role to commanders at various levels like Joint Force Commander, Combined Forces Land Component Commander, and United Nations Mission as required.

The main difference between these squadrons and the AFSOC SOF, other than the type of skills required, are that the SSTR individuals have a career-long regional focus. While at the tactical level, the individual will remain in a squadron whose regional focus will align with the respective GCCs. They can focus their culture, language, political-military training, and education along these lines and stay connected with the desk officers at the GCC. Additionally, as they are deployed in the field and attend IA workshops and training, they will build relationships within the interagencies, NGOs, and the host nation.

Expeditionary SSTR personnel can assist the U.S. government effort at all levels of planning and through all phases of conflict. They can plan day-to-day at the squadron, Geographic Combatant Command, and interagency level as well as deploy advisors and planners forward with a Combined/Joint Task Force and /or with some form of Provincial Reconstruction Team. Their expeditionary capability will poise them to begin executing stability operations once phase three is over. Their ability to begin assisting with basic services during the golden hour will prove essential in preventing an insurgency or further collapse of the government. Yet they will also plan to transition to civilian agencies as soon as the security situation allows. They will have the appropriate skills such as language and culture and will understand how to include the population in developing projects that are sustainable by the population. Over time, they will have built relationships with many of these civilians thus easing the burden of breaking down cultural barriers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the overall recommendation is to develop a cadre of officers that can support national security objectives and implement DoD 3000.05 from the Air Force perspective. This implementation must be developed through a formalized program that coordinates with other Services, the IA, as well as any possible actors. A formalized program will allow incorporation of lessons learned during future planning instead of the current process of losing the lessons as the Air Force doesn't track its SSTR skills and experiences. A new SSTR AFSC allows the Air Force to apply its warfighting capability in the realm of warfighting, which is characterized more by building partnership capacity than major combat operations ,while still maintaining the ability to respond to any other threat across the full spectrum of operations. Additionally, a fully developed cadre of SSTR officers can participate in policy development that they will be responsible for executing on the ground instead of just executing policy. Lastly, senior SSTR officers can advocate with other IAs for a unified national strategy on weak and failing states.

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